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TAGS: [EU](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: IRELAND/EU: UNSYG ANNAN RENEWS CALL FOR UN-EU  
CRISIS COOPERATION

Classified By: DCM Jonathan Benton, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: In an October 14 speech in Dublin, UNSYG Kofi Annan called for effective multilateralism to address global challenges and, in particular, increased UN-EU cooperation on crisis management. He welcomed the EU battlegroup initiative as a potential model for UN-EU collaboration on conflict prevention. In introductory remarks, Irish Foreign Minister Ahern emphasized Ireland's support for collective approaches to security, while highlighting Ireland's traditional military neutrality. Department of Foreign Affairs officials saw UNSYG Annan's speech as an opportunity to educate the Irish public that participation in UN-EU crisis management cooperation would not erode Ireland's neutrality. Foreign Affairs and Defense officials confirm that GOI participation in EU battlegroups is under intensive review, in preparation for the EU's Capabilities Commitments Conference in November. End summary.

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Annan's speech: Effective Multilateralism  
and UN-EU Cooperation  
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2. (U) In an October 14 speech to the National Forum of Europe in Dublin, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for increased UN-EU cooperation to fulfill the goals of the 2003 UN-EU Declaration on Crisis Management. UNSYG Annan commended Ireland's efforts during its EU Presidency to make such cooperation more structured, substantive, and broad-based. He welcomed, in particular, the development of EU "capabilities" in the context of the European Security and Defense Policy (a reference to the EU battlegroups initiative, whereby Member States would establish 10 divisions of 1,500 troops within three years for rapid deployment to conflict zones). Citing the French-led Artemis Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003 as a model for UN-EU cooperation, UNSYG Annan noted that the EU could address crisis situations with speedier deployments and more specialized skills than typical UN peace-keepers. He cautioned that these strengthened EU capabilities should not lead Member States to diminish their troop contributions to UN blue-helmet missions, and he lauded Ireland's decades-long participation in UN peace-keeping operations. Continuing the theme of effective multilateralism, UNSYG Annan urged collective action to address other international challenges, such as HIV/AIDS, economic development, and the Darfur crisis.

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Irish Comments: Differing Views on  
Neutrality  
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3. (U) In remarks introducing UNSYG Annan, Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern emphasized that the UN was the "ultimate guarantor" of Ireland's freedom and safety. He cited Ireland's view that unilateral action by any country or regional group could not resolve challenges facing the international community. Ireland thus supported collective approaches to security and had made UN-EU cooperation in crisis management a central focus of its EU presidency. FM Ahern emphasized that joint UN-EU efforts on conflict prevention spanned beyond military capabilities to include diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian instruments. He pointed out that the GOI would not allow Ireland's stance of military neutrality to be eroded. Rather, the "triple-lock" policy would remain: Ireland would only undertake overseas military action with UN, Cabinet, and Dail (Parliament) authorization. Like UNSYG Annan, Ahern also called for effective multilateralism on issues like economic development, and he promised that Ireland would meet its Millennium goal of allocating 0.7 percent of GNP to development aid.

4. (U) Immediate reaction from the audience of several hundred included comments from opposition party Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny that Ireland was not neutral, but merely unaligned. Kenny commended UNSYG Annan for re-energizing the UN, and he urged Annan to build a collective will among UNSC members. A Fine Gael colleague, Gay Mitchell, called for an end to Ireland's triple-lock policy, which he described as "nonsense." Mitchell recommended that Ireland should instead decide to take part in overseas military missions on a case-by-case basis. A member of the Sinn Fein party observed that the UN should have its own force, adding that

"outsourcing" to the EU or the United States would not solve the world's problems and could make the UN redundant.

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DFA Reaction: An Opportunity for Public Education;  
Government Decision on Battlegroups Not Yet Ready  
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15. (C) In a separate conversation with emboff, the GOI welcomed UNSYG Annan's speech as an opportunity to educate the Irish public on the legitimacy of Irish participation in UN-EU crisis management cooperation. According to Julian Clare, Department of Foreign Affairs First Secretary for UN Affairs, Irish citizens are confused as to whether Ireland might be drifting away from its traditional military neutrality, having recently participated in NATO-led operations in Bosnia (SFOR) and Kosovo (KFOR). Proposals for Ireland to join up with EU battlegroups contributed to the sense of drift. UNSYG Annan's address, said Clare, made clear that joint UN-EU crisis management was consistent with the collective approach to international security that had long characterized Ireland's military/foreign policy -- a point that Foreign Minister Ahern had stressed in his introductory remarks about the maintenance of Ireland's neutrality. Clare recalled that the synergies involved in UN-EU crisis cooperation had featured prominently in a January 2004 discussion between UNSYG Annan and then Foreign Minister Cowen. He added that the discussion had kicked off a concerted Irish effort during its EU presidency to shore up modalities for implementing the 2003 UN-EU Declaration on Crisis Management.

16. (C) The issue of Irish participation in battlegroups is still under consideration, with new ministers for defense and foreign affairs appointed only in late September. DFA officials have said privately that they favor Irish participation, both on the merits and because they believe overall Irish weight in the EU would be helped by their ability to contribute to the EU's defense ambitions. Meanwhile, Irish Defense Forces are exploring the modalities of Irish participation, including whether to contribute niche forces that could latch onto any battlegroup or to commit troops to one specific battlegroup. Officials note that the GOI does not view the EU's November 22 Capabilities Commitments Conference as a deadline for making specific commitments to the battlegroups, but recognize that they need to bring some indication of their intentions to the table. One contact said Ireland does not see UNSYG Annan's choice of Dublin for a speech on UN-EU crisis management cooperation as an attempt to pressure the GOI to contribute personnel to the battlegroups. Rather, the Dublin venue helps to emphasize the collectivist model for UN-EU cooperation, as embodied in long-standing Irish participation in UN-sanctioned peace-keeping operations.  
KENNY